

N^o 17

Mercurii 30. die Maii 1716.

Dr. BURSCOUGH's
SERMON

Preach'd before the Honourable
House of COMMONS

On the 29th of May 1716.

Cler, Dom, Com,

Mercurii 30. die Maii 1716.

Order'd,

THAT the Thanks of this House be
given to Dr. BURSCOUGH for the
Sermon by him Preach'd before this House
Yesterday at St. Margaret's Westminster,
and that he be desired to Print the same;
and that Mr. Comptroller and Mr. Addison
do acquaint him therewith.



PAUL JODRELL,
Cler' Dom' Com'

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd before
THE HONOURABLE
House of Commons

A T
St. MARGARET'S *Westminster*

On the 29th of May 1716.

B E I N G
The A N N I V E R S A R Y of the
R E S T O R A T I O N of King CHARLES
and the R O Y A L F A M I L Y.

By WILLIAM BURSCOUGH, D. D.
CHAPLAIN to his Royal Highness the
PRINCE, and Fellow of *Wadham*
College in *Oxford*.

L O N D O N,
Printed for T I M. C H I L D E, at the *White*
Hart in St. Paul's Church-Yard, 1716.

A
SERMON

Preached before

THE HONOURABLE

House of Commons

St. Margaret's Church

On the 23rd of May 1702

BEING

The Anniversary of the

Restoration of the Monarchy
and the Reformation of the Church



By William Burgess, D.D.

Chaplain to his Royal Highness the
PRINCE, and Fellow of New College in Oxford

LONDON

Printed for T. M. Child at the New
Shop in St. Paul's Church-Yard 1702



A

SERMON

Preach'd before the
Honourable House of COMMONS.

EPHES. v. 20.

*Giving Thanks always for all things unto
God, and the Father, in the Name of
the Lord Jesus.*



THE Apostle in this, and the two foregoing Verses, instructs Us in the difference between the Joys of the Righteous, and Profane. These He tells Us are Sensual, and arise from an intemperate Indulgence of their Lusts, and Ap-

Appetites; whereas those are wholly Spiritual, and have for their inexhausted Source the Goodness of an infinite Being who continually presides over them, and makes all things work together for their Good. Certainly the long Dispute which of these two should have the Preference would soon be decided, were Men but of so grateful a Temper as to turn their Eyes on the Author of all their Happiness. But this great and beneficent Being showers down His Mercies upon them, and they regard Him not; They feed and surfeit upon His Blessings without once looking up to the Hand that bestows them. 'Tis the Duty therefore of the Ministers of Gods Word to awaken Men to a Sence of this Duty, and to call them from time to time to a grateful Recognition of the Divine Favours. But, blessed be God, I find my self at present happily prevented in this Work, and the Public Voice of our Country which calls Us together this Day in the Presence of God, speaks louder, and with more Authority than any Private Voice. It assembles Us together to commemorate that unspeakable Mercy of God which was wonderfully completed as upon this Day, in putting an End to the great Rebellion; in the Restitution of the King, and the Royal Family; and in the Restoration of the Government

ment both in Church and State after many Years Interruption: A Blessing this which can never be over valued, and which, tho' long since bestow'd upon this Nation, no Distance of Time can ever wear out. The Distance indeed of Time which diminishes other Blessings, augments That of the present Day; and the Length of its Period is its greatest Recommendation. For since the Restoration of our happy Government was not a transient Act, or momentary Blessing, to be enjoy'd at once, and to be preserved afterward only in a grateful Memory; but is a permanent, lasting Happiness which we all of Us at present feel, and has been the Delight of every Year from the Day it was first vouchsafed Us; the farther that Day is removed from Us, the more extensive has been its Influence; and the greater Obligation therefore it lays upon Us for Praise and Thanksgiving. The surprizing Event of this Day was not an hasty, negligent Performance of Providence, to be once looked upon, and then thrown aside; but it is to be consider'd as one of its correctest, and most elaborate Works, which the oftener, and the longer it is looked into, the more it pleases.

Such therefore being the Nature of this
• Days Thanksgiving, I shall, without farther
entering.

entering into the History of an Event so well known in all its Circumstances, and so fully approved in all its Consequences, presume upon your ready Inclinations to offer up your Sacrifice of Praise to God; and may depend I hope upon your favourable Attention while I discourse on the Subject of Thanksgiving in general, and endeavour to lead Your Thoughts into the Consideration of the Extent of the Duty, of the great Motive to it, and of the Qualifications requisite to a due Performance of it.

And First as to the Extent of this Duty, 'tis so great and universal that the Words of my Text, we see, oblige Us to it at *all times*, and *for all things*. The meaning of which however is not that we should be every Moment of our Lives congratulating our selves, and giving Praise to God; but that we should always bear about with Us a Disposition of Mind ready to break out into grateful Acknowledgments at all proper Opportunities, and when any fresh Occasion calls for it. So that if we stand always ready to offer the Incense of Thanksgiving to our Father, tho' it does not continually ascend unto Him, We shall answer the full Design of the Apostles Exhortation, to *give Thanks always unto God the Father.*

For

For as a Man may be said to be always upon His Guard, who is ready to repel at all times the Assaults of his Enemy, tho' He may not perhaps stand every Moment of His Life in the regular Posture of Defence; So that Man may be truly accounted to be always thankful, who is always ready to acknowledge the Favours of Heaven, tho' He be not always actually on His Knees, or in the Posture of Adoration.

'Tis certainly as great an Affront to the Holy Writings, to hold them always to a literal Signification, as to force them against their Wills to put on a metaphorical; and the Scriptures may suffer as much by too strict, as by too loose an Interpretation; they speak to Us in the common Phrase of Mankind, and must therefore be interpreted, as all other Discourses are, so as to agree with common Sense and Reason. If therefore it be plainly unreasonable to think we must dedicate our whole Time to Praise and Thanksgiving, because we should then have none left to the Performance of our other Duties, 'tis evident we must take the Text in a more limited Sense, and not, upon the Account of any Expression in it, think our selves oblig'd to hold a never failing, and, as it were, an uninterrupted Day

B

of

of Thanksgiving to God. Besides, upon a strict and rigorous Interpretation of the Text, the Scriptures will be found to contradict themselves. For the same Apostle who commands Us in this place to be *always* giving of Thanks to God, commands Us in another to be always praying to Him; *Pray without ceasing*. So that unless we can praise God at the same time we pray unto him, which are Two very distinct and different Acts of Adoration, we must take up with a more easy and favourable Construction of the Words, and agree to the Meaning I have already given them.

Upon better Reflection, and considering the great and general Backwardness of Men to this Duty, I must confess that all this seems but a very unnecessary Caution, and more fit to have been given in the Primitive Ages of Christianity, when Men had their Hearts and Affections so inflam'd with a just Sense of the great and unspeakable Mercies of God to them, as was apt to lead them too far in the Adoration of His Goodness, and to the Exclusion of the other necessary Parts of Religion; than to an Age which every one sees and feels to be of it self but too remiss and unaffected in this great Duty; and which wants rather a vehement Exhortation to come up to it, than
an

to enquire first in what Sense, and how far our Miseries and Disappointments may be a proper Matter of our Thanksgiving to God.

Let this then be laid down for the most certain Truth, that nothing but what makes Us Happy can be the proper Object of our Joy and Thanksgiving. If then all our Expectations were confin'd to this World there could not be a greater Paradox advanc'd than to affirm that we ought to be thankful for the Afflictions of this Life. But because the Happiness of this World bears but a very little Proportion to what we expect, we should always measure our Good in reference to a future State; and think nothing miserable here which turns to our Advantage hereafter, nothing Advantagious in this World which will not prove so in the next. Upon which account the Miseries of this Life may claim a share in our Thanksgiving as well as the Blessings of it; because these may in some Instances prepare Us either for the Happiness of the other World, or for a more perfect Enjoyment of it. Hence it is that our Saviour pronounces them Happy *who are revil'd, and persecuted, and evil spoken of falsely for His sake, and bids them rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is their Reward in Heaven.* That St. Paul uses such triumphant

phant Expressions in the midst of Persecutions; inasmuch as they work for him a more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory. That St. James bids Us count it all Joy when we fall into divers Temptations; And that the first Christians took joyfully the spoiling of their Possessions, rejoycing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the Name of Christ.

Now all this is very True, and Certain. But then we must remember that these Sufferings are then only a matter of Joy and Comfort when they are undergone for Righteousness Sake. For otherwise we may delude Our selves, and charge those Sufferings on the Account of God which are nothing else indeed but the very natural Effects of our Sins, and Folly. One Man, for Instance, bears contentedly the Loss of His Estate, and in Merit of so much Patience expects confidently the Blessing of Job, and to have it doubly return'd in the other World; when if He will but consider His Circumstances with any tolerable Impartiality, He shall find Himself reduc'd to them meerly by His own Neglect and Imprudence. Another bears up tolerably perhaps under the Miseries of a decrepid Old-Age, and calls That, Submission to the Providence of God, which is nothing else but the Effect of His

His Youthful Intemperance. How few of the Miseries of this Life are really owing to the Appointment of God, in comparison of those we bring upon Our selves; And how few therefore, are there of them for which we may expect the Recompence of a Reward? Our Miseries are generally the Consequences of our Sins and Follies, and come not from God for the Tryal of our Patience, but the Punishment of our Disobedience; And are therefore the proper matter of Humiliation, and not of Thanksgiving. For could we be evidently assur'd that none of our Sufferings were the Effect of our own Sins; that they proceeded from no inexcusable Folly, and Negligence on our Part; but that we are exercis'd with them meerly for the good Pleasure of God, either for the Tryal of our Patience, or the Good of Others: How extravagant an Assertion soever it may at first appear, yet 'tis no more than what Christianity teaches Us, We might safely affirm that upon such a Supposition we might all fall down on our Knees, and give Thanks to God, as well for the Afflictions as the Blessings of Life. For 'tis the peculiar
C Triumph

Triumph of the Christian Faith, to change the very Nature of Misfortunes, and make them work together for Good to the sincere Professors of it.

Having thus far consider'd the Extent of the Duty, I proceed to the great Motive to enforce it; which is no other than the great Pleasure and Satisfaction of the thing it self. For He that feels in Himself a Delight and Complacence in this Duty, needs no other Motive to recommend it; And He that feels it not, performs not the Duty as He ought. Praise and Thanksgiving ought not to be urg'd upon Us like the other Duties of Religion; from the Command of God; from the reasonableness of it; from the Fear of Punishment, no, nor from the Hopes of a future Reward: For the Duty is pleasant in it self, and brings its own Reward with it. He that is not conscious to Himself of an inward Pleasure, diffusing it self thro' every Faculty of the Soul while He is taken up in this Act of Devotion, is not Hearty enough in it. For Delight flows in as naturally upon a Soul opening it self in the Praise,

Praise, and Adoration of the Divine Goodness, as Light does on the Eyes, and nothing but the most sleepy Disposition can keep it out. Hence 'tis that the Great Master of Thanksgiving is never in such an Extasie, nor appears so Fully Inspir'd as when This is the Subject of His Meditation. *Praise the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is withing Me praise His Holy Name. Praise the Lord, O my Soul, and forget not all His Benefits. Praise the Lord, For it is good to sing Praises unto our God; Yea, a joyful and pleasant thing it is to be thankful.* And in another place, in the most lively and affectionate Figure of Speech, He doubles it in each Sentence, *O sing Praises sing Praises unto our God, O sing Praises sing Praises unto our King.* These are the Strains of a Soul truly sensible of the Divine Goodness, and labouring for Expressions answerable to His Conceptions of it: And if they appear to any One, as 'tis possible they may, too soaring, and distastful, Let Him know 'tis because He is Unaccustom'd to such Strains of Devotion, that He cannot relish them, and because His own Sentiments are too Low and Groveling

that they fly Above Him. For all this Affection, and Ecstasie of Mind is not so much the peculiar Temper, and Completion of the Prophet, as the natural, and genuine Effect of thorough and repeated Considerations of the Goodness of God. And the Reason We are not alike mov'd with Him, is because we are not alike careful with Him to fix such Considerations in our Minds. Were this once done, We should break forth in the same Effusions with the Holy Men of Old, should be animated with the same Spirit, and enjoy a like Pleasure and Satisfaction with them; And till Men will be perswaded to do This 'twill be in vain to urge further Motives, or to talk of the Pleasure of Thanksgiving to those who are not prepar'd to receive it. The Pleasures of Thanksgiving are like the Pleasures of the Senses, like those of the Sight, or Hearing. If the Objects do not make their own way 'tis thro' some Defect in the Organ which should convey them; And 'tis as vain to urge any foreign Arguments in its Favour, as to recommend Beauty, from the general Esteem of the World, to One that has no Sight:
Or

Or the Charms of Musick, from the Doctrin of Proportions, to One that has no Ear. If the Eye, and Ear apprehend it not of themselves, there's no way left to make them sensible. If this Motive be of Weight enough to incline Us to the Duty of Thanksgiving, there remains only in the last place, that we take Care to perform it with these Qualifications.

First, That we offer it up, as the Apostle requires, in the Name of the Lord Jesus.

And, That while we are doing it, we resolve to depart from all Iniquity.

First, Our Thanks must be offer'd up to God, and the Father, in the Name of the Lord Jesus.

And this is a Point so absolutely necessary to every Act of Thanksgiving, that without it all our Praise and Adoration is but a Dead and Ineffectual Ceremony, and no way pleasing to God the Father. 'Tis the Name of Jesus only that

that enlivens all our Devotions, and gives them Strength and Efficacy at the Throne of Grace. 'Tis thro' His Name that we present our Supplications to the Father; thro' His Name that we obtain the Design of them; and thro' His Name therefore that we must offer up our Praises for their Reception. For tho' this part of our Religion may at first view seem least to require the Office of an Intercessor, yet if we consider it better we shall find the very same Necessity for this High-Priest to offer up the Sacrifice of Thanksgiving for Us, as there is for His offering up that of our Prayers; And that for this short and plain Reason: Because our Thanksgivings are no more an equal Return to God for the Blessings we receive, than our Prayers a just Obligation on Him, to grant them. Had we indeed Vanity enough to perswade Our-selves that in returning our Thanks to Heaven we paid a full Value for the Blessings we receiv'd thence, Our Thanks, we might be apt to think, would make their own Way to the Presence of God; But since they are so trifling a Return, and, tho' 'tis all we can do, yet still 'tis all so unequal to the Benefits

fits receiv'd, they must of necessity have some One to make way for them, to give Weight to them, and recommend them to our great Creator; Who can be no other than our Blessed Saviour and Redeemer. And in Him we may confide as a faithful Mediator, who as He has made up the Deficiencies of those Prayers by which we at first obtain'd our Blessings, so stands now ready to make up the Deficiencies of those Praises which we offer up for the Enjoyment of them. As therefore we would have our Praises effectual before God, we must present them to Him in the Merits of His only begotten Son.

The Second Qualification mention'd was a firm Resolution with Our-selves to depart from all Iniquity.

This indeed is a very general Qualification, in all Cases, and at all Times requir'd of Us. For whether we appear at the Throne of Grace in Supplication for Mercies, or Humiliation for Afflictions, whether we adore his Goodness, or fear His Displeasure, or confide in His Promises,

mises, or in whatever other Act of Devotion we may be engag'd, a firm Resolution of Obedience to His Laws, and Purity and Innocence of Life is the first Requisite, and the very Foundation on which we must build. However there seems to be something in Thanksgiving which claims a Resolution in us of Virtue and Obedience in a more peculiar manner, and makes it if possible more necessary, or the Defect of it more absurd at least than in any other Instance of our Duty. Since the Blessings of God must conclude an obstinate Sinner under so fatal a Necessity, that He can neither neglect the Duty without Sin, nor perform it without Madness. For the Man that is every Day sensible of the unmerited Favours of God, that He made Him at first out of Nothing, and by a continued Creation of Him preserves Him every Moment from falling to Nothing; that He has given Him a Nature little lower than the Angels, nay, has ennobled it above Theirs in the Incarnation of His Son; that He continually furnishes Us with the Conveniences and Pleasures of this Life, till He translates Us to the more exquisite Pleasures

'Tis certainly the Duty of all the Subjects of this Nation at all times, and on all Occasions, to Support, and Defend the Government. But this is a Day which methinks should particularly warm, and animate them in it. For when they bless God for the Restoration of the Government, and at the Distance of so many Years appear in His Presence to acknowledge His Hand in it; it becomes in a more peculiar manner their Duty to Strengthen and Support it; or they offer up to God a Mock Thanksgiving, and Praise Him for a Blessing which they declare to be not worth the keeping. When they thank God for putting an End to the Great Rebellion, and look with Detestation on the Authors of it; if in any respect they should be found themselves at the same time Favourers of Rebellion, they give the Lie to their most Solemn Professions, and affront God in the very Act of Praising Him. Nothing can qualify Us for the Duty of this Day, or make the Devotions of it consistent, but a sincere, and zealous Affection for the Government, and an utter Abhorrence of all Traiterous Combinations against it. Those

Loyal Subjects who can sincerely profess their Detestation of the present impious Attempts upon the Crown and Government, may be allow'd to detest all former Practices of the like Nature; Those who can sincerely praise God for suppressing the Rebellion of this Year, and confirming His present Majesty on the Throne of His Ancestors, may with equal Sincerity praise God for His ancient Mercies, and for Restoring our former King to the same Throne. As for all Others, whatever may be their Pretences, whatever Claim they may lay to this Day, and appropriate it to themselves, 'tis all in vain; They are utterly unqualify'd to appear in it; The Day it self refuses their inconsistent Devotions, and every Prayer of its Sacred Office exclaims against them. For what, in the Name of Contradiction, would they offer at? Would they praise God for putting an End to One Rebellion, when they are themselves at the same time wishing well to Another? Would they lament the Miseries and Oppressions of those Times, which they have only read of perhaps in History, and which neither they nor
their

their Fathers were concern'd in ; And encourage at the same time that ill Spirit in the People, which, should it prevail, must inevitably bring present Misery on themselves, and intail it upon their Children ? Would they thank God for the Restitution of the Royal Family ; And endeavour at the same time to dispossess a Prince who is undoubtedly of that Family, in favour of One, who, to speak the softest, is of a dubious Extraction ? Would they this Day rejoyce in the Restoration of the Monarchy ; And the same Day contrive to place One upon the Throne, who by Education, Interest, and Necessity, must turn this gentle Monarchy into the most oppressive Tyranny ? Or if all these are Inconsistencies too evident to be own'd ; Would they indeed Praise God for the Deliverance of this Church, and for restoring unto Us the publick and free Profession of His true Religion and Worship ? And would they also, in compliance with so gracious an Act of Providence, take care to put this Church and Her true Worship under the Guardianship and Protection of Her avow'd and irreconcilable Enemy ? Such are the manifold Contradictions which
Those

Those who would pass for Friends of this Day, and are Enemies of the present Government are involv'd in; And they are in truth of so gross a Nature, that there's no room left for Reasoning with them in the Case, or indeed for any thing else but our Prayers to Almighty God, that as many of them as are reclaimable may be speedily brought to a better Mind; As for those that are implacable may they be cloth'd with Shame, and Confusion; But upon the King and His Posterity may the Crown for ever flourish.



FINIS.

